

**BABY  
BIRDS AT HOME**

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Baby birds at home by Richard Kearton

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**RICHARD KEARTON**

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JAYS.

# BABY BIRDS AT HOME

By

RICHARD KEARTON, F.Z.S., Etc.

WITH FOUR COLOUR PLATES AND SIXTY ILLUSTRATIONS FROM  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
CHERRY AND GRACE KEARTON

CASSELL AND COMPANY, LTD  
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1912



## Preface

**T**HIS little book has been prepared in order to give boys and girls who love the countryside, and the wild creatures that dwell therein, two things. First of all, a little gallery of faithful pictures of baby birds at home amidst their natural surroundings, and secondly, a short and simple account of the interesting habits of their parents.

Baby birds differ very widely in appearance, habits, and behaviour. Those that have to remain in the nest and be fed by their parents for days or even weeks, such as robins, thrushes, hawks, and eagles, are hatched with their eyes closed and do not open them for some little time. On the other hand chicks that run about, or swim, directly they leave the egg-shell, such as the wild duck, plover, grouse, partridge and snipe, have them open. All chicks that leave the nest as soon as they are hatched have a good



coat of down to keep their little bodies warm. Many of those that are reared in nests, or in hollow trees, are also covered with down, such as the kestrel, sparrowhawk, and different species of owls.

Some, such as the chaffinch, skylark, and yellow-hammer, are hatched with tufts of down growing along their upper parts, and a few emerge from the shell without a particle of anything growing upon them. The common sparrow and cormorant are good examples of this bald entry into the world.

Young birds that run about as soon as they are hatched learn to catch insects directly, whilst those that remain in the nest have to defer this part of their education until a somewhat later period. It is not long delayed, however, for young sparrowhawks may be observed trying to secure blue-bottle flies that alight on the edge of their nest. Baby skylarks, flycatchers, and the chicks of many other species, endeavour to catch passing insects whilst sitting in the nest anxiously awaiting their parents' return with more food.

One feature of baby bird life is always very noticeable to the careful observer, it

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is the perfect obedience of chicks to their parents, otherwise many of them would never escape their enemies.

It is hoped that this little book will arouse an interest in the minds of boys and girls concerning our wild birds and their wonderful ways. Once that interest has been kindled, every walk in the country will reveal some new fact and create a fresh thrill of healthy pleasure.

RICHARD KEARTON.

*Caterham Valley, Surrey.*  
*October, 1912.*

